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ABSTRACT

This paper describes research findings which indicate that black students in competition with white students exhibit self-deprecating behavior. They devalue their performance relative to the performance of white students. A large percentage of these research findings are the result of work performed by Irwin Katz in small group settings. Katz and others have also found that the race of both the competitors and the experimenter effects the performance of the black student. The research reported in this paper attempted to expand on this research and examined the reactions of both black and white students when their performance was not equal. It also examined the effects of black power on performance and self-deprecation. Finally, it attempted to examine more fully white students' reactions to competition with black students. The results indicate that one positive benefit of black separatism is a decreased fear of competition. (Author/WS)

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Attitudes About Racial Separation and Student Performance

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A number of researchers have previously found that black students in competition with white students exhibit self-deprecating or self-disparaging behaviors. They disparage and devalue their performance relative to white student performances. For example, black students in competition with white students have been found to:

(1) lower their task goal levels when in competition with whites (Preston and Bayton, 1941).

(2) rate their own performance as inferior to white partners (Katz and Benjamin, 1960).

(3) make fewer proposals than whites in biracial partnerships (Katz and Benjamin).

(4) be less assertive when working with whites than when working with members of their own race (Katz and Benjamin).

(5) accept white student contributions uncritically (Katz and Benjamin).

(6) be more cooperative than whites in a conflict situation (Berger and Tedeschi, 1969).

Furthermore, such behaviors have been found to occur:

(1) when the black students held easier solutions to the problems than their white partners (Katz and Cohen, 1962).

(2) when the black students were made to display equal ability with their white partners (Katz and Cohen).

(3) when the black and white participants were matched for I.Q. and other background factors (Katz and Benjamin).

(4) when bonuses were promised for good biracial team work (Katz and Benjamin).

(5) when whites were demanding but not when whites were yielding (Hatton, 1967).

A large proportion of these research findings are the result of work performed by Irwin Katz in small group settings. Katz and others have further shown that the race of both the competitors and the experimenter affects black student performance (Katz, et. al, 1965: Katz, et. al., 1968: and Katz, 1968. See also Watson, 1970).

The research which is reported in this paper attempted to expand this research in several ways. First, the previous research examined student reactions only when their performance was approximately equal. The research reported here examined the reactions of both black and white students when their performance was not equal. Thus reactions to failure and success as well as to neutral outcomes were examined.

Second, the effects of black power on performance and self-deprecation were examined. All of Katz's work was done prior to the strong emergence of the black power movement and most was done prior to, or at least early in the civil rights movement.** Thus, very little research has examined the effects that espousal of black power has on black student performance and self-deprecation.

Finally, the research attempted to examine more fully white students' reactions to competition with black students. However, these aspects of the research will be only briefly reported here.

It was hypothesized that:

1. Those black students who espoused the black power ideology would have better performance scores than those who espoused the assimilationist orientation.

2. The black students who espoused the black power ideology and black separatism would exhibit less self-deprecation than those who espoused the assimilationist ideology.

3. The black separatists students would exhibit less self-deprecation under failure conditions than under success and neutral conditions.

The reasoning for hypothesis three was that under failure conditions the black separatist could blame white society and white institutions for his failure

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** Most of the original articles reporting his research were published between 1958 and 1964. Although some articles published as late as 1967 and 1968 reported research results, most of them only organized and extended the findings of the earlier articles. Given that publication backlogs exist and that analysis and writing takes time, most of the research was probably performed before the civil rights movement and definitely before the black power movement developed fully.

whereas under success and neutral outcomes he could blame only himself.

Thirty-six black and thirty-six white junior high school students from Chapel Hill, North Carolina, served as subjects in the experimental conditions, and six students of each race served as control groups. Measures of orientations towards black separatism and control variables were obtained in a pre-experimental questionnaire and measures of self-deprecation were obtained in a post-experimental questionnaire.

The students performed the experimental task twice. First they performed it individually. They were then matched with a partner of the opposite race. They were matched so that 1/3 would perform the task slower than their partner, 1/3 would perform the task faster, and 1/3 would perform the task in approximately the same time.

The task involved the sequential placement of ten numbered and differently shaped plastic blocks in a corresponding hole in a "Shapo" ball which is actually a child's educational toy. The task was chosen for several reasons. First it was amenable to definition as either an intellectual task (i.e. requiring quick recognition of different shapes) or as an eye-hand coordination task. The task was defined as an intellectual task for half of the students and as an eye-hand coordination task for the other half. Second, it could be repeated several times and average scores rather than single scores could be quickly and easily obtained.

The students performed the task a second time as a member of a partnership that was competing for a cash prize of $5.00. The instructions and experimental procedures were designed to induce both a cooperative and a competitive orientation in the students. The cooperative orientation was induced by having the subjects compete as a pair and by emphasizing this in the instructions. The competitive orientation was induced by having the students alternately performing the task and by obtaining estimates prior to each

trial. Evidences of both the cooperative and the competitive orientations appeared in comments and actions made by the subjects during the experiment.

RESULTS

The students' scores closely followed their actual performance scores. The outcome conditions effect on performance scores was highly significant for both black and white students. This effect which is shown in Tables I and II was expected to occur since the students were paired that way. A similar effect also occurred in the ratings the students made of their performance. Two measures of self-deprecation were included in the study. The students were asked to evaluate their own and their partners' performance on a scale. The difference in the evaluations was the first measure. The students were also asked to divide 100 points between themselves and their partners. The proportion of the points they awarded themselves was used as the second measure of self-deprecation. The strong effect of the outcome conditions on both of these variables for both the black and the white students is shown in Tables III through VI. These results combined with the performance scores shown in Tables I and II show that the students closely followed their performance scores in making evaluations of their performance in the biracial groups.

The separatism variable was weakly related to the performance scores of both the black and the white students. In both cases those who favored separatism tended to score better on the task than those students who favored assimilation. The correlation between the separatism index and scores during the group session was .230 for blacks and .301 for whites.

Further interesting results appeared when the separatism index was divided at the midpoint for use in an analysis of variance program. The main effect of the separatism variable was significant at the .05 level as shown in Table I. Further, there was a statistically significant interaction between

the separatism index and the outcome conditions (i.e., whether the students performed the task faster, about the same, or slower than their partners did). Within the success condition black assimilationists had slightly better scores than black separatist students. However, black separatist students had better scores in the neutral condition, and showed pronounced differences in the failure condition. In other words, the black assimilationist students performed slightly better in the success condition but the separatist students performed significantly better in the neutral and failure conditions. Overall the main effect indicates that one positive benefit of black separatism is a decreased fear of competition with white students, while the statistical interaction indicates that this effect is most pronounced in the neutral and failure conditions.

The interaction between the separatism variable and the outcome conditions also approached statistical significance for the white students (p less than .10). White separatists in the success and neutral conditions performed slightly better than assimilationist whites in those conditions, but white separatists performed worse than the assimilationist whites in the failure condition (see Table II). Katz and Benjamin (1960) had previously found that high authoritarian whites performed worse than low authoritarian whites in biracial groups. The research reported here indicates that white reactions are not simple however. Differences in the scores of both the black and white partners interacted statistically with their attitudes in affecting their performance scores.

Surprisingly, espousal of black separatism was unrelated to black self-deprecation. We had expected black separatism to be negatively correlated with self-deprecation. This was not the case. The evaluations the students made and the points they awarded themselves, when correlated with the separatism

index for black students were -.028 and +.076 respectively.

The evaluations the students made of themselves tended to follow the actual performance scores. Thus some interaction between scores on the separatism index and the outcome conditions existed but it also did not reach statistical significance (see Tables III and IV).

The white separatists on the other hand tended to indulge in self-aggrandizement. The correlations between the two measures of self-deprecation and the separatism index for white students were +.349 and +.328. That is, they evaluated their own performance as being better than that of their partner and they awarded themselves a larger proportion of the 100 points.

Again the evaluations the students made of their performance tended to follow their actual performance scores. The white separatists had performed slightly better than the white assimilationists in the success and neutral conditions, but performed worse than the white assimilationists in the failure condition. The evaluations the students made of their performance followed a similar pattern but the interaction was not statistically significant (see Tables V and VI).

Finally, a close comparison of Tables III and V reveals that self-deprecation by black students occurred in the neutral and success conditions but not in the failure conditions. The differences between blacks and whites <u>in the failure condition</u> were small and taken alone were not statistically significant. But, relatively large differences appeared in the neutral and success conditions. These black-white differences were statistically significant at the .01 level.

In other words, the black students in the failure condition acted very similar to whites in the failure. Both de-valued their own performance relative to their partners'. But the blacks did not de-value their performance anymore than whites in the same condition.

On the other hand, blacks in the neutral and success conditions deprecated their own performance. The difference in the evaluations that the black students made was greater than the difference in evaluations made by the white students. This is evidenced by the higher positive scores of the black students.

Katz's previous work found black self-deprecation occurring when the students had or were shown to have approximately equal ability. The research reported here suggests that black self-deprecation may occur only in situations where performances of blacks and whites are approximately equal or where blacks out-perform whites, and not where whites outperform blacks.

TABLE I

TWO-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE EXAMINING EFFECTS
OF SEPARATISM VARIABLE
AND OUTCOME MANIPULATIONS ON BLACK STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN BIRACIAL GROUP

Outcome Condition	Separatism Variable	
	Separatist	Assimilationist
Success	33.85*	32.50
Neutral	39.20	41.82
Failure	42.05	53.95

Source of Variation	D.F.	Mean Square	F	P
Separatism	1	160.23	4.24	.05
Outcome	2	608.64	16.10	.001
S x O	2	128.03	3.39	.05
Within	31	37.80		

*Note: Scores represent time in seconds;low scores mean fast times. In Tables I, II, III, IV, V and VI the separatist-assimilationist dimension was broken at the midpoint, which was a natural breaking point for two reasons. First, the particular wording of the items meant that scores higher than the median were an indication of acceptance of an assimilationist position while scores lower than the median indicated an acceptance of a separatist position. Second, the distribution on the separatism index was bimodal with the midpoint falling between the two modes. In most of the tables 6 cases per cell appeared. Unequal cell sizes was not a problem. The computer program used the "weighted means" method of approximating the sum of which permits unequal cell sizes. The within sum of squares is computed in the normal fashion and other sums of squares are computed by treating each mean as a single observation. The latter sum of squares are then divided by the harmonic N (see Walker and Lev, 1953, Chapter 14).

TABLE II

TWO-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE EXAMINING EFFECTS
OF SEPARATISM VARIABLE
AND OUTCOME MANIPULATIONS ON WHITE STUDENT PERFORMANCE IN BIRACIAL GROUP

Outcome Condition	Separatism Variable	
	Separatist	Assimilationist
Success	28.65**	32.90
Neutral	33.47	37.80
Failure	41.20	35.90

Source of Variation	D.F.	Mean Square	F	P
Separatism	1	10.55	0.34	N.S.
Outcome	2	181.68	5.80	.01
S x O	2	90.24	2.88	.10
Within	31	31.30		

**Note: Scores represent time in seconds: Low scores mean fast times.

TABLE III

TWO-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE EXAMINING EFFECTS OF SEPARATISM VARIABLE AND OUTCOME MANIPULATIONS ON DIFFERENCES IN EVALUATIONS FOR SELF AND PARTNER THAT BLACK STUDENTS MADE

Outcome Condition	Separatism Variable	
	Separatist	Assimilationist
Success	0.25**	-0.25
Neutral	1.00	1.25
Failure	1.33	2.33

Source of Variation	D.F.	Mean Square	F	P
Separatism	1	0.52	0.41	N.S.
Outcome	2	9.47	7.52	.01
S x O	2	1.56	1.24	N.S.
Within	31	1.26		

** Note: Negative numbers indicate subject rated self higher than partner. Positive numbers indicate subject rated partner higher than self.

TABLE IV

TWO-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE EXAMINING EFFECTS OF SEPARATISM VARIABLE AND OUTCOME MANIPULATIONS ON PROPORTION OF THE POINTS THE BLACK STUDENTS AWARDED THEMSELVES

Outcome Condition	Separatism Variable	
	Separatist	Assimilationist
Success	52.50	54.37
Neutral	43.75	41.75
Failure	38.33	40.83

Source of Variation	D.F.	Mean Square	F	P
Separatism	1	5.21	.03	N.S.
Outcome	2	583.73	3.48	.05
S x O	2	16.46	0.10	N.S.
Within	31	167.84		

TABLE V

TWO-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE EXAMINING EFFECTS OF SEPARATISM VARIABLE AND OUTCOME MANIPULATIONS ON DIFFERENCES IN EVALUATIONS FOR SELF AND PARTNER THAT WHITE STUDENTS MADE

Outcome Condition	Separatism Variable	
	Separatist	Assimilationist
Success	-1.33**	-0.33
Neutral	-0.14	0.40
Failure	1.80	1.29

Source of Variation	D.F.	Mean Square	F.	P
Separatism	1	1.04	1.37	N.S.
Outcome	2	16.82	21.84	.001
S x O	2	1.78	2.34	N.S
Within	31	0.76		

**Note: Negative numbers indicate subject rated self higher than partner. Positive numbers indicate subject rated partner higher than self.

TABLE VI

TWO-WAY ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE EXAMINING EFFECTS OF SEPARATISM VARIABLE AND OUTCOME MANIPULATIONS ON PROPORTION OF POINTS WHITE STUDENTS AWARDED THEMSELVES

Outcome Condition	Separatism Variable	
	Separatist	Assimilationist
Success	65.00	59.17
Neutral	53.57	50.00
Failure	36.80	40.00

Source of Variation	D.F.	Mean Square	F	P
Separatism	1	37.78	0.30	N.S.
Outcome	2	1660.61	13.07	.001
S x O	2	65.05	0.51	N.S.
Within	31	127.05		

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